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BIOGRAPHY.

MEMOIR

OF THE LATE REV. JOHN CASPAR LAVATER.

JOHN LAVATER was born in the year 1741, of very respectable parents, in the city of Zurich, Switzerland, who educated him in the strictest principles of virtue and religion.

From his infancy he had many serious impressions; and, when only seven years old, felt himself strongly drawn to seek God by prayer. "To *use* God," says he, "as my *own* God, was one of the earliest and most deeply impressed ideas in my mind. Observing the indifference of others towards God, I was determined to make the best use of him I could. I felt a need of his presence, and made it a constant practice to pour out my heart before him in fervent prayer every morning and evening: yet my light and volatile disposition oftentimes disturbed me in my devotions. To listen to sermons was too tiresome for me, so I took my little Pocket Bible to the place of worship; and, with the greatest eagerness, I read the Histories of the Old Testament, more especially that of Elias and Elisha. Christ and the New Testament had but a small share of my attention or affection at that time."

When ten years of age, young Lavater freely declared his intention to devote himself to the ministry, and, notwithstanding all the objections and difficulties he had to encounter, he never changed his mind; but zealously applied himself to the study of the Latin language, and other branches of human learning requisite for this purpose.

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In his fourteenth year he had a dangerous fit of sickness.—“When thus taken ill,” says he, “I seriously reflected upon my former life, endeavouring to purify my heart, most heartily forgiving every received injury, and asking pardon of all those to whom I suspected I had given the least offence.” This illness, he adds, left behind it many a serious impression.

Soon after this, having taken a long walk on a very hot day, and too eagerly drinking more wine than he could bear, he got nearly intoxicated; which grieved him to his very heart.

“Hardly,” says he, “any occurrence in my whole life has made such an indelible impression upon my mind as this accident. I shed streams of penitential tears, and nothing could erase the remembrance of it from my mind; and, even now, after the lapse of twenty-six years, it serves me as a powerful warning never to exceed moderation in drinking, in the least degree.”

In the fifteenth year of his age, a violent shock of an earthquake, and the happy departure of his elder brother, greatly contributed to confirm and to increase the good impressions and pious resolutions of his mind.

“When,” says he, “my brother was in his last moments, he sat up in his bed, lifted up his hands, and, looking up steadfastly toward Heaven, exclaimed,—“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”—Thus saying, he sunk down and expired. All of us were dissolved in tears. I saw my brother a dead corpse! Death and Heaven were my only thoughts; so I went to bed; but when I awoke the next morning, I felt quite pleased in my having become the eldest son of the family, and the heir of the cabinet of natural curiosities which my brother had collected. I could not help abhorring myself, on account of this sudden change of mind.—Oh! vanity of vanities! all, indeed, is vanity!”

When young Lavater entered upon his academical course, his talents soon began to shine forth so brilliantly, as to attract the notice of the most learned characters who were at that time Professors in the College at Zurich, some of whom endeavoured to encourage and direct his rising genius.

During the three years of his studying divinity, he was most deeply impressed with a sense of the infinite importance of well-employed or mis-spent time; and had such views of the awfulness of sin and the holiness of God, that he oftentimes humbled himself in the dust. He made it a point of conscience daily to examine himself, watching over all his thoughts, words, and actions, and most sincerely bewailing, not only every improper action which he had done, but even every impure motive which might have influenced his conduct. At the

the same time, Christ, in his person, and all his endearing characters and offices, was rendered exceedingly precious to his soul. To him he approached, "weary and heavy laden," seeking rest for his immortal soul, and entirely devoting himself to his blessed service.

In confirmation of what has just been stated, we subjoin a few extracts from Mr. Lavater's journals and letters, written about this time. In the early part of his twentieth year he thus expresses his feelings in a letter to a friend :

"Alas ! what a sinner I am ! Oh ! that all created beings might weep before God on my behalf ! and yet their combined efforts could not save me. * No, no ! I have sinned against the infinite Majesty of Heaven ! but, lo ! the Creator himself becomes man—my brother ! He lies prostrate before his Father ! he prays and wrestles, and sheds tears of blood for me—even for *me* ! Oh, what boundless love and compassion ! I am lost in wonder, love, and praise, and melted in tears of shame and gratitude ! I bow before him, and adore !"

In another place, he says,—“When I examine the secret springs of my actions, words, and thoughts, as in the presence of God, I must confess that I do not always act from a principle of pure love to God, and a sincere regard to his glory ; but alas ! too often I observe selfish motives, which I cannot but consider as grievously sinful. Genuine religion rests not satisfied with a mere outward form ; it requires the heart. All virtues, considered in themselves, are a mere mechanical motion, if they are void of the Spirit's enlivening influence. Morality, without the heart, is like a body without a soul. Both reason and revelation plainly tell us, that our good actions have no value whatsoever, if God be not their source, aim, and end. Now, for my own part, I will not deny the real good which the grace of God enables me to perform ; for instance, when I give alms, I seldom can discover any thing in it like hypocrisy, but rather I do it with the sincerest joy, and generally with a single eye to the glory of God. But, alas ! too often I observe, in the course of my conversation with others, a want of that simplicity and sincerity which is so precious in the sight of God, and for the attainment of which I long. Often I use improper expressions, and speak in a way dictated by self-love, seeking not so much the glory of God as to please myself. Sometimes pure motives to please God are so intermingled with an impure desire to please myself, that I can hardly ascertain which is the prevailing principle. From this I cannot but infer,

* It may not be improper to observe, that Mr. Lavater most carefully "fled youthful lusts ;" and was very much esteemed by all who knew him, on account of the regularity of his conduct, and the virtuous life he led.

infer, that I am not free from pride ; and should any doubt remain whether this really be the case, my being so very prone to anger, and that inward grief I feel within when reproved for any thing done amiss, ought to convince me that I have a proud and irritable temper."

"I know," says he, in another letter, "that I am wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ; but, blessed be God, there is a book called the Bible, in which I meet with a plentiful supply of the most approved and never-failing remedies, by a good use of which I may become rich, healthy, and clothed. I know that I cannot be saved without love to God and man ; for, without it, no true happiness can possibly exist. Now, the Holy Scriptures tell me that love is the fruit of the Spirit ; that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. But how am I to obtain this sacred Spirit ? This Jesus plainly tells me, Luke xi. 13. How foolish, then, any longer to delay !"

"All that can render a man completely happy, both in this world and the world to come, is set forth in the Scriptures in the most distinct, exalted, and solid way ; so that there is no book in the world which could lead us to any higher degree of wisdom, virtue, and happiness, than that which is obtainable by attending to the blessed doctrines of the Bible."

"One, and only one there is, in whom I find ten thousand times more delight than in every thing else. I mean Him who was God, who is to be the Judge of the world, who, *for me*, became man, to reconcile me to God ! O ! how happy am I ! Now my soul feels its immortality !"

In another letter, Mr. Lavater, after having described the sinful situation of a wicked man in his dying hours, thus addresses his friend :

"O, my dear friend ! I rejoice over you ; but, pray, never depart any more from the good way of righteousness ! Never look back ! First of all, endeavour to be reconciled to God by a dying Saviour, and then you may cheerfully run the way of his commandments.

"Until you have felt a godly sorrow, and an anxious concern about your sins ; until you have bewailed them with tears of the most unfeigned repentance ; until you cheerfully give up your weeping heart to the Son of God, deeply lamenting those very sins that nailed him to the cross ; until you become *sick*, as it were, with *love* to him ; until you confidently embrace his knees, humbly applying for a blessed experience of his healing powers ; until you have repeatedly experienced and exercised these things, you must never flatter yourself with making real advances in the Christian life. I know, by sad experience, how often we fall into sin and temptation, so long as we remain too fondly

fondly attached to any object of earth and sense. If we do not deeply abhor and detest sin, from an experimental view of its exceeding great sinfulness and awful consequences, we go our way, and fondly imagine that we are better than the common bulk of sinners; but even the smallest remainder of the most subtle pride may prove a snare to us, to lead us astray from the narrow way of life."

In the year 1762, Mr. Lavater, after having finished his Theological Studies, entered into holy orders, to the great satisfaction of his Professors; but under very humble views of his own attainments.

"The principal duties of my new station," says he, "require a close application to the acquisition of solid and scientific knowledge, and of exemplary piety, which ought eminently to shine far above the virtues of the very best private Christians. A clergyman ought to be possessed of a very solid and extensive knowledge of the languages, and of philosophy; but my progress in these necessary branches of learning is very imperfect; and how infinitely short do I fall of those moral accomplishments which ought to adorn a worthy minister!

"But, shall I rest satisfied with this humble confession?—No.—I will humbly cast myself down before my Creator and Redeemer, and firmly resolve to strive after the highest degree of perfection; never to make a stand; never to get weary in honouring God; above all things, not to become the slave of man; not to look for my own advantage; but I will endeavour, by the grace of God, to try all my actions by the rule of St. Paul:—*Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* Thus acting, I shall prove a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and act in a manner becoming his faithful servant."

Soon after his ordination, he thus addressed one of his dearest friends:—"You have preached this day; and, I trust, with much success. O let us consider the infinite importance of addressing immortal beings in the name of God! May the principle of St. Paul never fail to be yours: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves, your servants, for Christ's sake."

Mr. Lavater was only twenty-one years old when he performed an action which cannot but highly interest every impartial reader in his favour:—There lived in the city of Zurich, and even a member of its senate, a most wretched character, who, during the time he had been Prefect over a district of the Canton, had committed innumerable acts of the grossest injustice; yea, such abominable crimes, that all the country people loudly reproached and cursed him; but no one dared to call him to public account, he being related to several gentlemen who were members of the Zurich government, and son-in-law

law to the principal magistrate of the city. Mr. Lavater, after having often heard of, and duly examined into, the atrocities of the Prefect, committed even against helpless widows and orphans, could at last no longer refrain himself: his tender feeling heart was glowing with the noblest sentiments of justice and humanity, and felt an irresistible desire to plead the cause of the poor and oppressed. He was fully aware that his stepping forward in this cause would expose him to the frowns of the great and mighty, and occasion much uneasiness and anxiety even to his nearest and dearest relations; but he was determined to obey God rather than man. Having prepared himself by earnest prayer, and consulted an intimate friend, he first addressed a letter to the Prefect; in which he strongly reproached him for his detestable actions; and freely declared his full intention to bring him to public justice, should he not restore his spoils within the term of two months. This time having elapsed, and the warning proving in vain, Mr. Lavater proceeded to print a most solemn indictment against him; which he caused to be delivered to every member of the Zurich government. At first he kept his name a secret; but when called upon, he came forward in the most open manner, nobly avowed and fully proved the points of his indictment before the whole assembly of the Senate; and had the unspeakable satisfaction to see the wicked Prefect, who, conscious of his guilt, had saved himself by flight, solemnly condemned by law, his unjust property confiscated, and restoration made to the triumphant cause of oppressed poverty and innocence.

In the spring of 1763, Mr. Lavater set out on a literary tour to some of the principal places in Germany; from which journey he acknowledges himself to have derived the most extensive benefits:—"I received advantages," said he, "from my journey, of which I had not the least conception. My mind is continually enlarging, and my heart forcibly drawn after that which is good:—so greatly I profit by the conversation and example of learned, great, and good men."

In the year 1766, Mr. Lavater married an excellent and amiable lady, with whom he lived thirty-four years in the most exemplary and happy manner; and by whom he had eight children, three of whom, a son and two daughters, survive him.

How he felt on the solemn day on which he was united to his amiable bride, he shall inform us in his own words: "I awoke very early, in the most serene and cheerful frame of mind. The sun had just arisen; the resplendent glories of which both delighted my eyes and filled my soul with inexpressible delight. After having prayed and sung one of the beautiful hymns of the late excellent Mr. Gellert, I went to the apartment of the dear

dear object of my love, who cheerfully came forth to meet me, and wished me a thousand blessings. We could not but adore and praise God, out of the abundance of our hearts. Two considerations very forcibly struck my mind: first, That of the glory which might result to the providence of God from our union; and, secondly, That of the immortality of our offspring. I then retired to my own room, and wrote the following prayer:—‘Father of infinite goodness, who art in Heaven, and seest in secret,—blessed Author of our union, and Rewarder of them that diligently seek thee,—behold us in our new connexion, commencing in thy name. Being now assembled in thy presence, we bless thee with the most joyful feelings of our hearts, for having united us by the sacred bonds of marriage. Lo! we prostrate ourselves, and adore thee in the most rapturous strains of unfeigned love and gratitude! Yes; thou lovest us, most gracious Father; and we are sensible of this thy love! Oh that we may never lose sight of the gracious purposes for which thy wise providence has united us! Oh that we may have continually renewed a sense of thy presence with us! We will, with heart and mind, rejoice in thee; and gladly serve thee with constant faithfulness and unremitting zeal. Let nothing allure us from thee; but keep us most closely united in thee. Be thou our supreme good!—let thy word be our food, and virtue our delight! Preserve us from the deceitfulness of sin! Let us be watchful over ourselves, constant in our devotions, fervent in prayer, sincere and upright in our dealings, faithful and affectionate towards each other! Let thy fear accompany us, O thou omnipresent and gracious Lover of mankind! Lord, thou knowest the sincerity of our resolutions; let our sweetest reward be the answering of these our prayers! May our whole life be consecrated to thy service, and entirely devoted to the cause of virtue and religion! Let us never forget these our resolutions, not even for a moment! O how sweet to call thee our Father! Let us remain thy obedient children, unto the very end of our days! Be our God and our Guide, that we may remain faithful unto death! Amen.’

The first public office which was entrusted to Mr. Lavater’s care, was that of chaplain to the orphan-house in Zurich; upon which he entered in the year 1769. Here he found a very large sphere of usefulness. His sermons were much admired, and numerously attended; for he displayed in them great force of natural eloquence, accompanied with that divine unction of the Spirit of God which convinces the understanding, and wins the affections of the heart.

He used to write his discourses; and, by constant practice, obtained such a facility of committing them to memory, that he wanted but a few minutes for this purpose: yet he never
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confined himself strictly to his notes ; but was very successful in making alterations in the pulpit, suitable to time and circumstances. A chief part of his attention was devoted to the large flock of orphan children, to whom he shewed the most tender regard and affectionate care. He possessed a talent of conversing with children in an eminent degree, condescending to their very lowest capacities, and knowing how to keep alive their attention, to occupy their understanding, and to make a deep impression upon their tender hearts.

(*To be continued.*)

DIALOGUE II.

BETWEEN AGNOSTES AND PHILALETHES, ON THE DOCTRINES OF THE DECREES OF GOD, ELECTION, &c.

(*Continued from page 109.*)

Agnostes. **S**IR, I am come, agreeable to my proposal at our last interview, to converse further on the subject to which we then attended, and mention objections to the doctrine you have espoused, which, in the opinion of many, and in my view, are sufficient to show, that it cannot be true, but must be very absurd and impossible.

The plan, which you contend is the object of the decrees of God, you say, is the best possible, and contains the greatest good that could take place, greater than could be contained in any other supposeable or possible plan ; otherwise you would reject it. But such a plan is inconsistent with there being any evil, sin or misery in it. Therefore as this evil actually exists to a degree far beyond our conception, this cannot be the best imaginable plan. Surely it would be much better not to have any evil. There must be more good, if there be nothing but good, than if the good is attended with evil.

Philalethes. Are you sure that you are a competent judge in this matter ? How can you be sure there cannot be more good, in that plan which includes a degree of evil, than in one in which there is no evil ? Is not this contrary to fact and experience ? God has in fact laid a plan of operation in which evil is included. He must therefore have thought this the wisest and best plan, by which he should be most glorified, and the greatest degree of happiness should be produced, by making sin and misery the occasion of inconceivable degrees of more happiness, than there could be if there were no evil. That man must be conceited, arrogant and impious above measure, who thinks he

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is able to judge, and dares to say, that it would have been better were there no evil; that God would be more glorified, and there would be much more good and happiness, if there were no evil. We find by experience, from what has actually taken place, that sin and pain have been made the occasion of great good, which could not have otherwise existed. The instances of this are too many to be mentioned now. I shall only hint at two. The sin of the brethren of Joseph, and the consequent sufferings of Joseph were necessary to lay the foundation, and be the occasion of a scene and series of good beyond description, or our conception. And had there been no sin and misery, there could have been no redemption, and no such character and works as those of the Redeemer, by which the divine character is gloriously displayed, as it could not otherwise have been; and the redeemed will eternally enjoy a kind and degree of happiness that never could have existed had there been no evil, which may, and doubtless will overbalance, by millions of millions of degrees, all the evil that ever did or shall exist. Who then dare say there would have been more good, and it would have been wiser and better, if no evil had existed in the universe?

Besides, if it were not best that evil, either moral or natural, should exist, why did not God prevent the existence of it? If he was not able to do it, and it has all taken place contrary to his will; then he is in such a sense and degree impotent, that he is not to be trusted unlimitedly, and in all cases, and in those wherein we stand in the greatest need of his assistance and protection, respecting our preservation from sin, and the government of our own minds; and protection from others who may be disposed to do us hurt. Nor can he be trusted to restrain from sin in any instance, or prevent its rising to any imaginable height, or the duration of its continuance. And if he is crossed by the introduction of evil, and it is, all things considered, solely against his will that it should exist, but was not able to prevent it, is not this inconsistent with unlimited felicity? Yea, must it not occasion infinite sorrow and misery? But if he was able to prevent the existence of it, while he knew it was not best it should exist, and yet suffered it to take place, where is his *wisdom* and *goodness*? By this horrid supposition, we at one stroke strip him of all moral goodness!

Ag. We are not troubled or moved by all this, as we think we have a full and satisfactory answer by attending to the nature of the freedom essential to moral agency. This cannot be restrained so as to prevent moral agents committing sin, without depriving them of moral agency, so as to render them incapable of moral actions, of praise or blame, rewards or punishments; or of any moral government. Such restraint is in its own nature as inconsistent with liberty, and it is as impossible to make

them agree with each other, as to make two and two to be ten, or two contradictions to agree. And as it is not properly owing to the want of power that the Divine Being cannot make two direct contradictions to be both true, as this is no object of omnipotence itself, this is equally true in the case before us; restraining moral agents from sin, and yet continuing their freedom and moral agency, is as contradictory and impossible, as it is to make two to be ten.

This was known to God, and he knew that if he did create free moral agents, they would be liable to sin, and that some of them, at least, would sin; but he knew that it was better to create free, moral agents, and continue their freedom, though he knew some of them would sin and be miserable forever, than not to create, and have no moral government.

Phil. I perceive, Sir, you suppose that God had and did decree a plan of operation and events, even the best that could be formed, though it would have been much better if sin could have been excluded: but I think it is a very imperfect, undesirable and even impossible plan, which I shall endeavour to show directly. And you allow that God foreknows all the actions of free moral agents, and forms the plan of his own works accordingly. This I also think to be inconsistent and impossible, according to your notion of freedom and moral agency: for if in order to be free their volitions and actions must be contingent, without any previous cause, or any thing whatsoever to render them in the least degree certain, they must be fortuitous, and altogether uncertain what they will be, or that they will ever be, till they actually exist. That an action should be foreknown to have a certain future existence, when it is altogether uncertain that it ever will exist, is a palpable contradiction, and impossible. But of this more will be said hereafter.

Your answer to what I have said, and your whole scheme is founded on your notion of that liberty which is necessary to render a creature a moral agent. If this notion be a mere chimera and is impossible, your whole scheme falls to the ground. But without attending particularly to this now, I observe that your scheme supposes that God has made creatures, even the most important of all creatures, moral agents, for the sake of whom all other creatures and things are made and preserved, to be so independent of himself with respect to their moral conduct and character, which is the most important affair in the universe; so that they, in the exercise of their freedom, form their own character wholly independent of him: and he must wait upon them to see what they will do in order to know what his plan of conduct shall be, and accommodate his works to what they will choose to do, independent of him. Thus they are made not only independent

independent of him, but he becomes subject to, and dependent on his creatures, in all the moral concerns of his kingdom, which really comprise the whole. But it is impossible that creatures should be made thus independent on God. If they can be made to be independent in this instance, they may be made independent in all other instances, and be equal with God, and so be gods, and not creatures. The latter is no more contradictory and absurd than the former. This will please the natural pride of man, which aspires to be equal with God, and even above him: but the friends of God will renounce it with pious abhorrence!

Ag. I shall make no observations upon what you have now said. Perhaps the learned are able to confute it all. But I must here observe, that your doctrine of the decrees of God makes men mere machines, and is wholly inconsistent with all human liberty. It binds men down to a certain way of acting, and fixes all their actions before they are born, and they must act just so. How is it possible then that they should have any liberty?

Phil. You have mentioned your notion of the liberty which is necessary to moral agency, upon which your whole scheme is founded. I have endeavoured to show that your notion of liberty contained things which are inconsistent, impossible and horrible. You now, in a different view, mention liberty again, as inconsistent with the doctrine of God's decrees, as I have stated it. This cannot be decided without knowing what human liberty is, and when men may be said to act freely. But before we enter upon this question, I would observe, that the objection you now make is as much against the fore-knowledge of God, in which you believe, as it is against his decrees. For if God knew from eternity what would be the actions of men in every instance, they were then fixed and certain, and could not be altered, but must take place just so; which is the only objection you mention against the decrees. But the fore-knowledge of God implies his decree of every thing and action foreknown; that it shall be just as he sees it will be. For how could they be future, without any cause or reason of their futurity? And this cause must exist when or before it was or could be known that they were future, and would exist. And this could be nothing but the purpose or decree of God; for there was nothing else then existing that could be the cause or reason of this but the purposes of God. For instance, it was foreknown that the world would exist in the same form and manner in which it does exist. But how and whence could this be foreknown, except in the purpose or decree of God to make just such a world? Therefore, while you acknowledge the foreknowledge of God, and deny his decrees, which are necessarily

necessarily implied in it, and make an objection against decrees which is equally against fore-knowledge, you are inconsistent with yourself two ways, and your objection is effectually silenced. Many have been made sensible of this; and have become more consistent with themselves, either by admitting the doctrine of God's decrees, or giving up his foreknowledge. And you must do one or the other, or remain inconsistent with yourself, and I believe self-condemned, unless you are resolved not candidly to *think* on the subject, or to be convinced.

But let us return to the consideration of liberty, and try to find wherein it does consist. Have you ever studied the subject, and determined upon careful examination when men do act freely?

Ag. I confess I have not spent much study or thought on this subject; but I have heard what some learned men have written on liberty, and what others have said, who think there is no difficulty in the matter, viz. that the freedom of a moral agent consists in his *originating* his own volitions, and consequent actions, independent of any other cause, or just as he pleases. And I have been satisfied with this definition of liberty, without any further inquiry.

Phil. It is a notorious instance of pride, arrogance and self-conceit, that men should think themselves able peremptorily to decide that God cannot make men free, consistent with their entire and absolute dependence on him for every motion, volition and action, so that none of these can take place without his determination or decree; but if he make them free agents they must have power to originate their own actions independent of him; so that he cannot interpose and determine what they shall do, without destroying their liberty; he must therefore be so dependent on them, and they are so far above him in forming their own moral character, that he must first know how they will act, in order to know how he may conduct towards them, and in governing the world.

And I ask you seriously to consider what are the unavoidable consequences of this notion, were it true. If God can in no case interpose and direct and govern the volitions and moral actions of men, so that their acts of will and choice, as to the moral nature of them, and which way they shall turn, must be so independent on him, that he cannot intermeddle to influence them without interrupting and destroying their liberty and moral agency; then, when God determined to create moral agents, it was wholly independent of him, and therefore uncertain, whether any, or some, or all of them would be holy and obedient, or sinful and rebellious; as this depended altogether on their own capricious will, the uncertain, fortuitous turn of their volitions, whether they should be right or wrong. And if any or
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all should be disposed to rebel against their Maker, God could not prevent, and continue their freedom, though it were infinitely better on the whole, for the universe, if not one moral agent should sin, and the evil consequences of rebellion could not be prevented or remedied to all eternity.

For instance, when Adam, the head of the human race, was made, though it was infinitely better and more desirable that he and all his posterity would not sin; yet their sin and rebellion, and all the consequent misery could not be prevented, without destroying them or their moral agency. And if they could not be preserved from sinning, when they had become rebels, it was uncertain, if not improbable, that all, or even any of them would be willing to return to obedience, whatever means should be used with them to this end; for if God could not keep them from sinning before they began to sin, surely he cannot recover them from their chosen rebellion, when their will was strongly inclined this way. And if they should by their own self-determining power turn from sin, they could not be prevented falling into it again. And though Jesus Christ has come into the world and died with a view to save sinners, and reclaim them from rebellion to obedience; it was altogether uncertain whether any would be willing to hear and obey him, as this depends wholly on their own arbitrary, contingent will. And if any should at any time become willing to obey, by the fortuitous exertion of their own independent choice and self-determining power, there is nothing to prevent their soon determining the contrary, and falling totally and finally into sin and ruin; so that Christ might come into this world and die to save sinners wholly in vain, and not one of the human race be saved. And if any, or ever so many should turn to him and persevere in obedience and get to heaven, it would depend on their own uncertain, changeable free-will and capricious self-determining power, whether they would continue holy, or rebel and sink into ruin, and heaven be deprived of all its inhabitants at once.

All this dreadful uncertainty is contained in your scheme, my friend; in your notion of human freedom and moral agency. It renders the issue of the most important concerns of free agents, or the moral government of God, and of the universe wholly precarious and uncertain; so that all may terminate in that which is infinitely worse than nothing.

Ag. I have an easy and short answer to all this, which you have painted in such hideous colours. God foreknew every thing, and how free agents would act in every instance, and that all things would issue as well as can be consistent with human liberty.

Phil.

Phil. I am sorry to hear you mention the foreknowledge of God again, as it is an evidence that you have not well attended to what I have already said on this head. The divine foreknowledge, Sir, necessarily implies all the decrees of God for which I contend, and is founded on them. This is plain to a demonstration. And if you understandingly admit the former, you must believe the latter, or be grossly, and I must say *shamefully* inconsistent with yourself. But of this I need say no more.

I have to add, that not only all the consequences I have now mentioned inevitably follow, were your notion of human liberty true and to be admitted; but no such notion can be admitted, or conceived of, as it is impossible, is inconsistent with itself, and most absurd. It is contrary to all reason, to the experience and conscious feelings of men, and to common sense; and at the same time directly opposite to the Holy Scriptures. All this is capable of demonstration; and though I have not time to exhaust the subject, I trust that I can in a few words prove my assertion to every candid, impartial person, who will properly attend to the subject.

That men originate the acts of their own will by a self-determining power, independent of God, or any other being but themselves, in all their exercises of freedom, not only supposes, what is really impossible, that men in every free act of will, exercise will and choice, not only without any motive, but contrary to all motives that can possibly be presented to their minds; but also supposes what is in itself absurd, and a contradiction, that in originating and determining a free act of will, men exercise or put forth an act of will by which they determine what the first free act of will shall be; so that there is an act of will which determines the first act, that is, a determining act of will which originates the first act of will, and this supposes an act of will takes place in order to the first act; for the mind cannot originate or determine any thing, or be the active cause of it, in any way but by *acting*, or by willing and choosing. It appears therefore that a plain inconsistency and contradiction is implied in this notion of a self-determining power, which cannot be explained or conceived of. But if it should be said that the act of will in determining the will with respect to other acts of it, is the first act, which does produce and direct the following acts of the will, it will be asked whether this first act is determined by the mind, what it shall be? If not, then it must exist without a cause, or by some external cause, and not by any self-determining power of the mind; and therefore cannot be a free act of the will, according to their notion of freedom. But, if this, which is now called the *first* act of will, be determined by an act of will, as it must be, if determined at all, then it

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is really not the first act, but is determined by a foregoing act; and this foregoing act of will must, in order to be a free act, be determined by a foregoing act, and so on without end, which supposes a series of acts without any beginning. For, if we stop any where, and suppose a first act of will, without any foregoing act, this, by the supposition, cannot be determined by the agent, and therefore cannot be a free act; and if the first act of will, which determines all that follow, be not free, then none of them can be free, according to this notion of free acts, as they are not produced by a self-determining power. Hence it appears there cannot be any such power, as the notion is impossible, and destroys itself. No man has, or can have a real idea of it; but they have amused and bewildered themselves with a set of words without any consistent or real ideas. If you, or any one else, desire thoroughly to understand this subject, I advise you to read President Edwards on freedom of will, Dr. West on moral agency, and Dr. Edwards on liberty and moral necessity, in answer to Dr. Samuel West. In these books the notion of a self-determining power is unanswerably confuted.

I have to add, that this notion of liberty is not only unreasonable, self-inconsistent and impossible, but is contrary to the common sense, experience and feelings of mankind. If we consult our own experience and feelings, that we may know what are those exercises in which we feel ourselves to act freely, and which we call freedom, we think and know ourselves to act freely when we are voluntary in what we do, or act according to our own will and choice; and we know we act freely if we act from our own choice, whatever were our motives in thus willing, or whatever were the external cause of our choosing as we do, and not otherwise. We do not consider what went *before* our choice in order to determine whether we act freely, as our freedom does not consist in that, be it what it may, and has nothing to do with it; but in our willing and choosing, or acting voluntarily, or as we please. This is all the liberty that can exist or be conceived of or desired. I may safely appeal to you and to all men, whether this be not all the liberty of which you or they are conscious; or whether there be any other kind of liberty which is desirable, or of which you can have any clear or consistent conception.

But if all the foregoing objections to your notion of liberty did not wholly overthrow and demolish it, (which indeed is an impossible supposition) yet there is another at hand, which is perhaps more plain and striking even to them who think more superficially. It is this, that such an independent power in man of self-determination of his own will and choice, what it shall be, were this possible, is directly inconsistent with the whole

whole of the Bible ; in that man is represented as altogether dependent on God in every respect, even in his most free exercises of will and action, so that while he freely moves, wills, and acts, he is so wholly in the hand of God that he is moved and directed by God in every motion and free action of his. No man can attentively and properly read the Bible without observing this. It is held up to view in the historical, prophetic and doctrinal parts of it ; and in innumerable declarations, directions, and promises. There it is said, The heart of the king, and consequently of all men, that is, their will, by which they act freely, is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water ; he turneth it whithersoever he will ; that he worketh in men to will and to do, according to his good pleasure ; that he gives a heart, a disposition and inclination to know and love him ; he promises that he will give a new and obedient heart ; will put his Spirit within them, and *cause* them to walk in his statutes, and they *shall* keep his laws, and do them. And there are innumerable instances in which God predicts what men, both good and bad, shall do to accomplish his purposes ; and promises that he will change the hearts of men, and make them holy. But it would take hours, if not days, fully to exhaust this point from scripture. The partial view now given is sufficient to answer the present purpose, and show that your notion of liberty is a contradiction to the whole of the Bible.

And now, how is it possible that you, Sir, and others should imbibe and obstinately adhere to such a notion of human liberty, so pregnant with the most horrible consequences ; and when examined, is found to be inconsistent with itself, impossible and inconceivable ; is contrary to the experience and feelings of men, and to the whole of divine revelation ? Is it not the only way to account for this, to suppose their minds are so depraved, ignorant, proud and conceited, that they love darkness or error, and hate the truth, and therefore will not come to it and be convinced, and embrace the truth ? Jesus Christ, you know, gives this as the only reason of the fatal errors and delusion which depraved, wicked men imbibe, and in which they persist.

And why will not you, Sir, relinquish this notion of liberty, which cannot be supported, and is so contrary to scripture and reason, and be no longer so vain and arrogant, as to think that the omnipotent, infinitely wise Being cannot make a moral agent perfectly free and accountable for his moral conduct, and capable of virtue or vice, consistent with such creatures being absolutely and in all respects dependent on him, and with his decreeing whatsoever shall come to pass ? And why will you not be content with that freedom of which you have a sensible
idea,

idea, and feel that you are free when you act voluntarily, or of your own free will, which is agreeable to reason and the common sense of mankind, and perfectly agreeable to the Bible, and your dependence on God for all things? You may then lay aside pride and self-dependence, and walk humbly with God. And you may then consistently and sincerely pray to God to make you holy and endow you with every Christian grace, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, to will and to do according to his good pleasure; which you cannot do consistent with the notion of liberty which you have entertained; for how can you or any man pray to God to do that for you which you must do yourself independent of him, and which he cannot do for you, without rendering you not a free agent? If you have prayed at all, your prayers have doubtless been inconsistent with your principles, if not inconsistent with your heart. And this has often been observed to be commonly, if not always, a fact, that they who have your notion of liberty contradict it in their prayers. And indeed it is very difficult to form a prayer consistent with that notion; and quite impossible to make a scriptural prayer, without contradicting it.

Ag. I am tired with your lengthy discourse, to which I own I have not paid much attention. Many learned men think as I do, and have written on the subject, and I am satisfied with what they say. My thoughts run chiefly on other objections which they and I have to make against your doctrine; but as I cannot now stay to mention them, I will take another opportunity to do it, with your leave.

Phil. It is a discouraging and dull business, I confess, to converse on important subjects, and endeavour to instruct and convince those who have no ears to hear. However, I am willing to have another interview, and attempt to answer all your objections, hoping you will attend better than you say you have yet done.

(*To be continued.*)

A LETTER

To a Christian Friend, who wished to have the Evidences for Infant Baptism exhibited from Scripture.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WILL try in this letter to bring forward some of the scripture proofs for infant baptism; and if your mind stands the same about baptism, as when I saw you last, possibly it may be of service to you; and if it is otherwise with you, possibly it

will do you no harm. The first proof I shall mention, is drawn from the *manner* of God's covenanting with his people in former ages, wherein he had respect to their offspring. In Gen. vi. 18, God entered into covenant with Noah, and in consequence of it directed him to bring his *family* into the ark with him. Peter, in his 1st epistle, iii. 21, says, "*The LIKE FIGURE whereunto even BAPTISM doth also NOW save us,*" &c. But how the *like figure*, unless the children of believers are to be baptized with themselves? Paul says, in Heb. xi. 7, that Noah "*prepared an ark to the SAVING OF HIS HOUSE! by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.*" So believers should by faith view the coming storm of wrath, and house themselves and children in the figurative ark (baptism); if they would condemn the conduct of the careless world, who are setting God at defiance themselves, and are refusing to do any thing towards their children's salvation. When the Lord called Lot out of Sodom, he directed him to take his two daughters with him; Gen. xix. 15. Sodom represents this sinful world, that is to be destroyed in like manner by fire; Zoar represents Christ; Lot, those who are called out of the world to Christ; his being directed to take his family with him sets forth the duty of believers in taking their children from the world, and devoting them to the Lord, and training them up for him, that they may be his, and escape the overthrow of the wicked.

When God entered into covenant with Abraham, he therein promised to be a God to his seed as well as himself; and also engaged to *establish* his covenant with his *seed after him in their generations* for an *everlasting* covenant; Gen. xix. 7, &c. He and his seed were expressly directed to apply circumcision, the token of this covenant, to their children as well as themselves. See ver. 10 and 11, and onward, of the same chapter. This token of this covenant the apostle Paul calls the *sign* and *seal* of the *righteousness of faith*. Rom. iv. 11. Now if Abraham is the *father of all them that believe*, (as he is said to be in the before cited Rom. iv. 11.) and if believers are the *seed of Abraham*, and *heirs according to the promise*, Gal. iii. 29, then it follows, that if that promise were a reason why Abraham should circumcise *his* children, it is as good a reason why his spiritual seed should baptize *their* children, unless circumcision be still in force. For it is as certainly true, from express scripture authority, that those that be Christ's are heirs according to the promise, as it is that Abraham had that promise made to him. Again, if that covenant were established with Abraham, and with his seed after him for an *everlasting* covenant, to hold good to him and his seed *forever*, Luke i. 55, and believers are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise, then this covenant stands good still; and the command to circumcise the children of the faithful

ful *then*, is as good authority to baptize them *now*, as the command to keep the seventh day *once*, as sabbath, is to observe the first day *now*. For as the change of the day from the seventh to the first, does not abolish the sabbath, but there still remains a *rest to the people of God*; so neither does the alteration of the token of the covenant, from circumcision to baptism, release believers from the obligation to devote their children to God in baptism. For they that are of faith are *blessed with faithful Abraham*. Gal. iii. 7. It is in vain to object, that the Abrahamic covenant belonged to the law. For we read in Gal. iii. 8, that the gospel was preached to Abraham. This agrees with what Christ told the Jews in John viii. 56. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." But how was the gospel preached to Abraham, and how did he see Christ's day? Why in those same promises that directed him to devote his children to God. *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not made to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, BUT THROUGH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH!* Rom. iv. 13. Consequently devoting children to God is a gospel ordinance, because he was directed to it by the preaching of the gospel. Therefore all his faithful children should do the same; for those that are the children of Abraham, *will do the works of Abraham*, John viii. 39. Those are his children who walk in the *steps of his faith*, Rom. iv. 12. We read, Gal. iii. 17, The law, which was 400 and 30 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect! Therefore that covenant was distinct from the law, and for *substance* stands good still, coming to the Gentile believers through Christ, Gal. iii. 15, 16. Those promises primarily respect Christ, and through him respect all believers; and they are to evidence their standing in that covenant of promise through Christ *now* by baptism. Gal. iii. 27 and 29. For as many of you as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, *and heirs according to the promise!* Can any thing be plainer from these passages, than that believers by baptism profess to be Christ's, and by being Christ's, become heirs to the promise made to Abraham; and by being children of Abraham, are under obligation to do the works of Abraham, and baptize *their* children, as he circumcised *his*?

My next proof shall be from other texts, not immediately relating to covenanting. Read Solomon's Song, i. 8. There the woman represents the church or believers—the shepherd's tents, the places where the ministers of Christ teach and administer ordinances—the kids, the unconverted children of believers, who are to be brought to the ministers of Christ, and devoted to God, and instructed (or fed) with the same wholesome doctrines

doctrines that Christ's ministers preach. Jeremiah xxx. we have promises of the restoration of Israel, and in the 20th verse we are told, "*their children also shall be as aforetime.*" If this prophecy reaches to gospel times, then certainly the children of God's people must be devoted to God, or they will not be as aforetime. God claimed the offspring of his people as his, and said they were *born unto him*. Ezek. xvi. 20. And for this reason, because that he was an husband unto his people. But God stands in the same relation to his people now; for saith the Apostle, I have espoused you to *one husband*. 2 Cor. xi. 2. And if this marriage connexion between God and his people of old made it such a peculiar crime for them to sacrifice their children to idols, instead of devoting them to him; then will it not follow, that if the same relation subsists between God and his people now, that they ought to acknowledge it by devoting their children to him publicly? And will it not admit of a serious inquiry, whether those who refuse to acknowledge their children to be the Lord's by dedication, do not go very far in disavowing the marriage contract between Christ and their own souls? and so may be charged with spiritual whoredom and adultery, as God's people were of old! In Ezek. xviii. 4, God says, "*behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine.*" How suitable then to acknowledge God's right to the soul of the child by open dedication. In Mark x. 14, Christ says, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*" How shall they be brought unto him openly now, but in baptism? In 1 Cor. vii. 14, we read, "*Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.*" But how holy, unless by dedication; as the dedicated things of the children of Israel were called holy, being devoted to an holy use? When Lydia's heart was opened, she was baptized and her household. Acts xvi. 15. The jailor believing was baptized and *all his* straightway. ver. 33. Paul makes mention of baptizing the household of Stephanus. It is not said, He and *part of his*, but *ALL* his were baptized. They were not *their own*, but *his* and *hers*, which denote that they were young, and belonged to them.

Another proof is drawn from the church being the same in all ages; or the Gentile believers being taken into the Jewish church. In Rom. xi. 17, we read, "*and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;*" and in Gal. iv. 28. "*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise.*" See also Acts iii. 25. The import is *this*, the *real children* of God under the former dispensation composed the church of God, in distinction from those who rested only in external forms. And all the children of God, under the gospel dispensation, are partakers with
them

them of the root and fatness of the *same olive tree*, or church of God. But if they belong to the *same church*, they are entitled to the *same privileges*; and one of their privileges was to devote their natural offspring to God. For Abraham begat Isaac and circumcised him; and so Isaac, Jacob. Acts vii. 8. Consequently believers of the same church ought to devote their children *now* to God in baptism. For the Apostle says expressly that *we are as Isaac was*.

But, it is objected to this view of things, that it is said in Heb. viii. 8, "*I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel*," &c. but let that passage be attended to in its connexion, and it will appear that the *new covenant* there spoken of, is not opposed to the covenant of promise made with Abraham, but the very same thing. For it is said in the close of the 10th verse, that this new covenant should consist in *God's being their God, and they being his people*; which exactly comports with the covenant made with Abraham. *I will be thy God*, &c. which is the very thing that is fulfilled to those that overcome and get to heaven, Rev. xxi. 7. So that the new covenant stands opposed only to the covenant that God made with Israel, *in the day when he took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt*, Heb. viii. 9; which was the law of ceremonies, that was added 400 and 30 years after, and could not make the promise of none effect. It was added till Christ should come, to whom the promise by way of eminence was made. "*Who blotted out the handwriting of [such] ordinances, nailing it to his cross*." Col. ii. 14. The veil of the Mosaic ritual being thus removed by Christ, he, as the glorious Sun of Righteousness, arising and shining upon his people, has caused the covenant of promise made with Abraham to appear with splendour as a *new-covenant*, decorated with new seals, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. So that as Israel were *all* baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and their children with them, 1 Cor. x. 2; believers are now from among the Gentiles baptized into one body with the godly Jews, 1 Cor. xii. 13, and therefore their children should be baptized with them. For these things are *our examples*, says Paul, 1 Cor. x. 6.

After long and close searching of God's word, taking it in connexion, and after much earnest prayer to God for light and direction, the evidences in favour of infant baptism have thus shone from God's holy word upon my soul with such clearness, that all that I have met with from books and men, (and I have met with much from both in the course of the 12 years past) has never been able to extinguish it. I am sensible that I, and other men, are *fallible* and liable to err, but I know of no better way, than to go for direction to the *unerring* word of God, and to God the fountain of light. This I can say, I have reason to bless God for the light he has afforded my soul by his word

word and Spirit respecting this branch of Christian duty; and for those measures of spiritual consolation afforded to me in practising accordingly. For I am fully persuaded, that I may say with safety, that if ever I enjoyed the presence of God in any duty, I have in giving up my children to God in baptism; and that enjoyment has sometimes abode with me for days; so that I have frequently thought my feelings in some measure resembled those of the jailor, when he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house. For certainly I have reason to rejoice, *for* and *with* all my house, when my children are set apart for God. I have reason to rejoice that ever I was brought to believe myself, and be adopted into Christ's family, and attend to his institutions; and that he has given me the liberty to give up my children to him, in belief of that ancient promise, *I will be a God unto thee, and thy seed.* How sweet are the blessed promises of God; and O how extensive! How calculated to claim my confidence, excite my gratitude and raise my joy! In this view of God's gracious covenant extending to me and mine, the words of David have frequently and powerfully occurred to my mind, when he went in and sat before the Lord, and said, "*Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? and this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and is this the manner of man, O Lord God?*" Here my joy has taken wing, and with holy David mounted celestial heights; and with astonished rapture, surveyed and adored the boundless extension of divine benignity! Then has God's word appeared an unfathomable deep, not to be fully comprehended, but still the harmony and consistency appeared glorious. Both Testaments seemed to be bound together and connected, as the different parts of the human body, by sinews and veins; and to separate the covenant of promise from the gospel, seemed to be parting asunder what God had joined together, and calculated to injure the whole system of truth. The recital of these views and feelings re-enchants the sacred flame while I write; and O, to be forever filled with such joy, as such views are calculated to excite! Is this the force of mere tradition, imagination, or human invention? If so, what is religion! Such kind of *inventions* as leads my heart off from the world, and all *human inventions*, to centre in God, and glory in his unchangeable covenant through Christ, and quickens me in running the way of God's requirements heaven-ward, I conclude, are inventions of God's own devising. O that not only my soul, but the whole world might be filled with them, and that happy time come, when *all the families of the earth shall be blessed* in like manner! The blessed day of Pentecost will then *again* be fully come, when it will be said, repent and be baptized,

baptized, *every one of you*, for the promise is to you, and *your children*. I am however sensible that *feelings* are not to be made the *rule of duty*. But when duty is determined by the word of God, answerable feelings are very desirable; and may be considered as good *corroborating evidence*. The famous *Rutherford*, when he was imprisoned for the truth, and was there favoured with uncommon joy, and divine communications, frequently expressed himself to this import, "I know this is God's truth I am suffering for, because he smiles so upon my soul; for he *will not set his seal to a blank!*" If I should give scope to my feelings, I should soon fill another sheet. I therefore forbear. That you may be directed by God's word and Spirit in this branch of Christian duty, and in every thing else, is the prayer of yours in Christian love,

JOTHAM SEWALL.

ON COVENANTING WITH GOD.

PART III.

(Concluded from page 97.)

AN ADDRESS TO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE people of God are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, designed to show forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. That they should act up to this high character, and to the design of their vocation, is of incalculable importance. The honour of God and of the Redeemer, the credit of the gospel, the order and beauty of the church, the peace and joy of individuals, the general diffusion of Christianity, and the salvation of mankind are highly concerned in it. To promote this great design it is commanded, That they should exhort one another daily—That they should consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.(1) They should consider one another as to the relation in which they stand to each other as brethren in Christ, and as under indispensable obligations to him, and to one another. They should consider each other with respect to their dangers, temptations, weaknesses and tears, that they may counsel and warn each other against sin; that they may pray for each other; that they may encourage, assist, and stimulate each other to every Christian duty; to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time. They are not only required to exhort

(1) Heb. x. 24.

hort one another daily, but to do it so much the more, as they see the day approaching (1) Time is short, and flies away with rapid wing. The momentous day of death and judgment is swiftly approaching us. A day when time and all opportunities will be no more. A day in which all things shall be made manifest, and every man shall be rewarded according to his works : A day in which the world and all which is in it shall be burnt up. This awful, wonderful day is approaching nearer and nearer every hour and moment, whether we sleep or wake, whether we stand all the day idle, or whether we do the work to which our great Master hath called us. He hath not only commanded us to exhort, and press one another to duty every day ; but to do it more and more in proportion to the approach of that day when we shall stand together before the judgment seat of Christ. Our love, faithfulness, zeal, and energy, in urging each other to duty should increase and rise higher and higher in proportion as we see this day approaching.

This duty, this kind office, the writer has been attempting to perform in the preceding papers, on covenanting with God, and is still further attempting to discharge in this address. This will naturally follow what he hath written on that subject, and may serve further to stimulate us to the duties already suggested. It behoves him to exhort you in realizing views of the day which is approaching ; of its near and hasty approach to himself and you, and of its immense eternal consequences to us both. It is of high concern to you to receive this brotherly exhortation in the love of the truth, and in the near and realizing views of death and the judgment day ; and to be quickened and animated to all holy living so much the more as ye see the day approaching. The belief of such a day, how it approaches, what a day it will be, and what its eternal consequences, should awaken in every breast the highest concern to keep covenant with God : to be circumspect, prayerful, sober, vigilant, steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. The apostle having spoken of this day and its concomitant events, observes, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness ! Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. (2) In this day the secrets of the heart, the secrets of all men, will be revealed, and judged according to the gospel. Every deceit and specious pretence will be detected, and every mask and false covering removed : and how we have payed, or neglected to pay our vows will be made manifest, to our exceeding joy and triumph, or shame and contempt, before assembled worlds. No pleas of fair professions, of distinguishing privileges, of offices and

(1) Heb. x. 25.

(2) Pet. iii. 11, 14.

and high standing in the church, of common or extraordinary gifts, without grace, will be of the least avail. Unless we are born of God, united to Christ by faith, and live godly in Christ Jesus, the door will be shut against us. No pleas will ever avail to open it. What solemn and deeply affecting admonitions has our Lord and Judge given us of this! Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.(1) When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets: but he shall say, I tell you I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, and ye yourselves thrust out.(2) How should premonitions, like these, penetrate the heart of every professor, of every minister, of all church officers, as well as common Christians! Since persons so distinguished by gifts and privileges, and of such high standing in the church, shall thus be disowned by Christ, and shut out of his kingdom, how should it engage all to work out their salvation with fear and trembling! How should they strive, even with an agony, to enter in at the strait gate! How should they watch and pray always, that they may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man! Suffer me, dear brethren, to plead this with you by the solemnities of that day, when we shall stand together at the judgment seat of Christ. How dignifying and blissful will it then be, to be found among those whose hearts have been sound in God's statutes and steadfast in his covenant! But who can bear to be thrust out of the kingdom of God, and to dwell forever where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth?

At the same time let me entreat you by, and plead with you the will and commands of God and our Divine Redeemer. It is written, This is the will of God, even your sanctification.(3) Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.(4) Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.(5) This is a faithful saying, and this I will that thou affirm

(1) Matth. vii. 21, 22.

(2) Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27, 28.

(3) 1 Thes. iv. 3.

(4) Levit. xix. 2.

(5) 11 Tim. ii. 19.

firm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. (1) God not only requires his people to be holy, but to be eminent in holiness, abounding in all the fruits of righteousness, in every good word and work. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (2) Then is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (3) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect. (4) This, my brethren, is the express language of the divine word, the declared will of God. And do we profess ourselves to be the sons of God, and that Jesus is our Lord, and shall we not obey him? How can we pretend to love him, or to be his disciples, if we regard not his will, and keep not his word? How can we stand before him in judgment, if we despise his commandments?

Further, let me plead with you, the faithfulness of God in keeping covenant with his people, the excellency of the covenant which he hath made with them, as an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. These furnish additional and endearing motives to activity and fidelity, in keeping covenant with him. He is the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations. (5) Hence his people should be faithful in keeping covenant with him. They are under indispensable obligations to be followers of him as dear children, and they are bound in point of gratitude for his infinite goodness and faithfulness in keeping covenant with them. The peerless excellency, wonderful grace, order and perpetuity of the covenant, render the violation of it most ungrateful, uncreature like, inexcusable and abominable.

Further, our blessed Saviour was faithful to us in the great work of our redemption. No poverty, no shame, no agonies of the garden, nor of the cross could divert him, a moment, from pursuing his Father's honour and the good of his people. He is still the same faithful Redeemer. He lives forever interceding for us, and governing all things for the good of them who love him. Shall we not be faithful to him? Shall we not walk as he also walked? Should not the same spirit be in us, which was in Christ Jesus?

Again, should not the great love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ constrain us to a cheerful and universal obedience? The love of God in devising a way of recovery for lost men, in which he might consistently enter into covenant with them, in giving his only begotten Son from his bosom, to purchase the blessings of the covenant; and in his condescension to become

(1) Titus iii. 8.

(2) Matth. v. 16.

(3) John xv. 8.

(4) Matth. v. 48.

(5) Deut. vii. 9.

a covenant God and Father to them, is matchless, and hath no parallel. It passeth all understanding. The love of Christ in laying down his life for the sheep, and in purchasing the immense blessings of the new covenant for his people, exceeds all calculation. It has in it every thing attractive and endearing. It should constrain us to a most strict and conscientious obedience to the whole will of God. The apostle Paul therefore besought the Christians of his day, by the mercies of God, that they would present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. This he insisted was but their reasonable sacrifice. (1) From this consideration that Christians are not their own, but bought with a price, he presseth it upon them to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit, which are God's. (2) This is his language to all the churches, and to us. It is the language of the love of God, and of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. This love, these mercies of God, constrained the apostles and primitive Christians to a life of wonderful self-denial, patience, fortitude and holy living. They loved not their lives even unto death, that they might obey, honour and enjoy Christ. Can we imagine that we indeed love him and are his disciples, or can we expect to share with them in the inheritance of all things, if the love of Christ have not in some measure, the same influence upon us? Can we believe that he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood? That he hath delivered us from the wrath to come, made us the sons of God and heirs of all things, and not deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world? Have we this hope, and shall we not purify ourselves even as Christ is pure?

May not professors be still further pressed to live godly in Christ Jesus from a consideration of the purpose for which they were chosen in Christ, from the grand design of his death, of their effectual calling, and of the gospel, which was to make them holy in heart and life? The people of God are all chosen in Christ to be conformed to his image, to be holy and without blame before him. And whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. (3) According as he hath chosen us in him, from the foundation of the world; that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. (4) The death of Christ was for the same purpose, the sanctification of the church: that the saints might perfect holiness in the fear of God. It is written, Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he

(1) Rom. xii. 1.

(2) 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

(3) Rom. viii. 29.

(4) Eph. i. 4.

he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Christians are called to be holy. It is the design of their effectual calling. Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling. (1) The grand design of the gospel, as it respects the saints, is their sanctification. For this its teachers, ordinary and extraordinary, were given: for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (2) Shall we in these views live in a loose, careless manner? Can we be willing to counteract the very design of the death of Christ, of our effectual calling, and of the gospel? Can any true Christian do this? Certainly he cannot. Whoever does it has an evidence in himself, that he is a hypocrite; and that he hath no part nor inheritance among the saints. How should these considerations awaken all our concern to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called! How should we, like the apostle, forgetting the things which are behind, press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus!

Allow me still further to plead with you the glory of God, the honour of Christianity, and the salvation of your fellow-men. These are all highly concerned in the inoffensive, holy walking of professing Christians. Nothing is so dear to God as his own glory. This is the ultimate end of all his works. This all his people are commanded in all things to seek. The honour of Christ and of his gospel, and the salvation of men lie near to the heart of God, and to the hearts of all his people; but nothing so dishonours God, injures the cause of Christianity, opens the mouths of infidels and blasphemers against God and our holy religion, and puts such a stumbling-block in the way of men's believing, as the loose, unholy walking of professors. This furnisheth infidels with one of their most artful and plausible arguments against the religion of Jesus. Loose and scandalous professors are some of the most grievous enemies of Christ and the gospel. They are the Judases who, in his own visible family, betray him and his dearest interests. The apostle Paul, therefore, in his day testified against them, even weeping, that they were the enemies of the cross of Christ, and that their end was destruction. (3) The unholy lives of those who have professed the Christian religion have, probably, done more dishonour to the Saviour, and greater injury to the church, than all the persecutions which have been raised against her. Can any of us be willing to act this ungrateful, perfidious

(1) 2 Tim. i. 9.

(2) Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.

(3) Phil. iii. 18, 19.

ous and horribly wicked part? Can we be willing, or are we able to abide the consequences? To be brought forth at last to the perdition of ungodly men?

On the other hand, when Christians live religion, it does great honour to God and to the gospel, and at the same time, puts a wonderful beauty upon the churches. Hence our Saviour testifies, Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. (1) This shows the excellency of religion, that it is heavenly and divine. Its effects on individuals and on society, in their piety, righteousness, sobriety, humility, peaceableness, and in whatever is lovely, useful and of good report, show that its author is God, and bring the highest honour to him. It gives others conviction of the truths of the gospel, and causes them, while the light of true Christians shines before them, to glorify our Father who is in heaven. The self-denial, patience, meekness, fortitude, and holy lives of the apostles and primitive Christians, was one of the principal external means in their day, of bringing men to the belief of the truth. It is still equally important and necessary, to promote the same end. What powerful motives should these therefore be to persuade us to live wholly to God? He admits his people to covenant with him, that they might cleave unto him, and be unto him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory. (2) He hath commanded us to conduct ourselves in such a manner as that he in all things may be glorified. (3) That whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God. (4) Jesus Christ humbled himself unto death, that his Father might be glorified and sinners saved. This was the language of his heart, when his soul was troubled, and sorrowful unto death, Father, glorify thyself. He chose rather to suffer the agonies of the garden, the shameful and cursed death of the cross, than that his Father should not be glorified and sinners saved. Can we be his, unless the same spirit be in us? Is it possible to be his disciples and not regard his glory, the honour of his gospel, and the advancement of his kingdom? Do not these lie near the heart of God and our blessed Redeemer? Are they not of great consideration with all those who love him, and keep covenant with him? Suffer me then, dear brethren, to plead with you, the honour of God, of your Saviour, his glorious example, the honour and advancement of Christianity, the encouragement, edification and comfort of your brethren in Christ, and the conviction and salvation of those who believe not, that ye walk unto all well-pleasing. Suffer me to plead with you all the solemn and weighty considerations suggested in these papers, on covenanting, and keeping covenant with God.

And what shall I say more? Shall I plead with you the happy

(1) John xv. 8. (2) Jer. xiii. 11. (3) 1 Pet. iv. 11. (4) 1 Cor. x. 31.

happy effect which this would have upon the churches? That it would cause them to look forth as the morning, make them beautiful as Tirzah, and comely as Jerusalem? That this would engage the presence of God with them, to comfort, edify and protect them? That when the spices of the church's garden flow out, then their Beloved will come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruit? That then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord? That then his going forth will be prepared as the morning, and that he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth? That he will give us great refreshment in his ordinances, secret, private, and public? Shall I mention how, in this way, you will assure your hearts before God? The light, peace and triumph it will give you in the hour of death?

Shall I plead with you, the degeneracy of the times? That error is coming in like a flood? That iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxeth cold? The necessity which there is of good people's arising and standing in the gap, and making up the hedge? Of holding fast the form of sound words which have been delivered unto us, and of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints? The special duty of all Christians acting in character, as the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, to prevent total corruption and darkness? Shall I plead with you, the peculiar honour of faithfulness to God and our covenant engagements, in times of great and general corruption? Shall I name unto you, Enoch, Noah, Lot and Elijah, Daniel and the three children, as your examples? Who walked with God in times of great and general wickedness; and whom he delivered and honoured above all the men, who have lived upon the earth? Shall I mention Phinehas, who was zealous for the Lord, and to suppress the wickedness of his people, and how it was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations forevermore? (1)

May it not be pleaded, that God hath not only set these examples before us for our encouragement and imitation in the worst times; but that he hath made exceedingly great and precious promises to all those who will walk with him in those dark and evil days? That to those who feared him and thought upon his name, at a time of uncommon infidelity and licentiousness, among his ancient people, he promised, That a book of remembrance should be written before him for them? That they should be unto him as his peculiar treasure, and that he would spare them in the day when he shall make up his jewels, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him? (2) That he promised unto the few names in Sardis, who had not defiled their garments, that they should walk with him in white; and that he declared them to be worthy? (3) These

(1) Psal. cvi. 30, 31. (2) Malachi iii. 16, 17. (3) Rev. iii. 4.

These are some of those weighty considerations, some of those endearing and forcible motives and examples, which God hath set before us to engage our fidelity in his service. By these he commands us, pleads with, and presseth us to keep covenant with him. And do not our hearts, in contemplation of them, burn within us? Is not our zeal enkindled, and are not our resolutions invigorated? Shall we not, deeply impressed and impelled by their united energy, lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith? As we have received him, shall we not walk in him, rooted and established in the faith, as we have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving? Shall we not watch and pray always; praying with all prayer and supplication, in the spirit, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints? Shall we not wrestle with God, that the spirit of primitive Christianity may be poured out upon all our churches, and upon their pastors? That we and all our brethren may maintain a more close and humble walk with God? That this address might be succeeded to this happy effect on ourselves and others? Shall we not strive to grow more and more in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?—To excel in the religion of the closet, of the family, and of the house of God; and in the constant, cheerful discharge of all relative duties? Shall we not exhort one another daily, and consider one another to provoke unto love and good works? Shall we not do these duties so much the more as time flies away, and as we see the day of death and judgment approaching? Shall we not from this time shake off all slothfulness, and be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord?

Dear brethren, if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, let us, I beseech you, fulfil the joy of the apostles and of all good men, by being like minded, to perform these duties, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, observing all things, whatsoever Jesus hath commanded us. Amen.

OBSERVATIONS ON JEREMIAH XVII. 9.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

No. II.

(Continued from p. 113.)

HAVING briefly remarked on the deceitfulness of men's hearts with respect to each other, we are now to consider the deceitfulness of their hearts with relation to themselves.

Not

Not less do mankind practise deceit upon others than upon themselves. It is a general truth, with respect to them, that they love darkness. Hence it is that they refuse to come to the light.

The man, whose worldly affairs are in a deranged state, and whose property is wasting away through his extravagance or inattention, is unwilling to adjust his affairs and come to a settlement with his creditors. Thus it is with mankind in general, in a religious view. Their own character, the true state of their souls, the relation they stand in to God, &c. are subjects about which they do not like impartially to employ their minds, as it would not fail to excite in their breasts painful emotions. Hence they remain in a state of profound ignorance with respect to these subjects, while their deceitful hearts tell them that they possess much knowledge and discernment. The fool, in a moral sense, is wiser in his own conceit than seven men who can render a reason. While the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, wicked men or impenitent sinners do not know, do not consider. Such is their character as delineated in the scriptures of truth.

Some particular examples of self-deception will now be noticed. These will principally relate to wicked men *in a state of moral security*. Our remarks, however, will not be confined to such characters, but in some degree apply to good men; for as good men are subject to much moral imperfection, so they are liable to deceive themselves, and do really deceive themselves, in many respects. Peter's heart was deceitful after he became a real Christian, and greatly deceived him with respect to the strength of his attachment to his Master. And James and John, when they would have fire come down from heaven and consume the inhabitants of a certain village of Samaria, knew not what manner of spirit they were of. But if such may be the situation of the green tree, what must be that of the dry?

Wicked men in common, or in a state of moral stupidity, greatly deceive themselves with respect to the situation of their hearts towards God. Thinking that God, as the scripture expresses it, is altogether such as themselves, they are led to imagine that they are friendly and affectionate towards him. At least, they believe their hearts are not in opposition to him. Oppose and hate the God of heaven! Impossible. Hate that God, who made me, continually preserves me in being; that God, who feeds me from his store house, and clothes me from his vestry; who daily showers down upon me a rich variety of blessings; that God, who gave his Son to die for me, and who has provided for me a great salvation—My heart in a state of enmity against this all good and merciful Being! Surely I am conscious of no such thing; I do not, I cannot believe it. It is impossible. Such are the deceitful suggestions and conclusions of the hearts of stupid, unconvinced sinners. Although

Although the scriptures teach, in the most express and unequivocal manner, that wicked men are God's enemies, that their minds are enmity against him, and that they are hostile to his laws and government, yet their deceitful hearts plead, that this representation does not apply to themselves personally ; and as they are not conscious that they possess such characters, they either apply the representation to others, or urge that the representation is not literally correct, but highly figurative or hyperbolical. Thus a deceived heart turneth them aside from the knowledge of the truth.

Wicked men, no doubt, are pleased with existence, and the numerous blessings, which they receive from the hand of God ; but this is very different from being pleased with the character and general government of God. Let them, like Job, be stripped of all their worldly property and enjoyments, will they then, like that holy patriarch, in the exercise of submission say, " Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord." If such would be their conduct, under this reverse of their circumstances, " what meaneth the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen, which are so frequently heard ?" what meaneth the murmuring of sinners under very inconsiderable losses and disappointments ?

That wicked men love *that being*, whom their deceitful hearts lead them to consider as the God of heaven, will not be questioned. Wicked men, in a state of moral stupidity, apprehend that God is their friend ; that the dispensations of his providence are designed to promote *their particular good*, and that they will, in some way or other, actually promote it ; and that such, and so great is his mercy, as to secure them from the second death, and confer upon them everlasting life. Indulging sentiments, like these, of God, instead of viewing him as their enemy, as a consuming fire, and as determined to execute upon them the fierceness of his wrath, should they die in their present condition, they vainly imagine that they love the true character of the God of heaven. But when God is represented to their view as an absolute sovereign, as having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and as hardening whom he will ; as setting his face against them, and walking contrary to them ; as opposing their selfish views and pursuits ; as refusing to hear their prayers, and even holding them in abhorrence—When God is represented as pointing all the curses of his violated law against them, without making them one promise of mercy, while they remain in an impenitent state ; that there is much reason to apprehend he will doom them, hereafter, to everlasting punishment, and that there is no other ground of hope that they shall escape this dreadful doom, but the mere sovereign mercy of

God. When such a representation is made of God, (which is the scripture representation of his character) how often, and in how many ways do they discover their disapprobation of, and the enmity of their hearts against him ! Nor is it unfrequently the case, that they make an explicit avowal of their sentiments and feelings. They do not in many instances hesitate to say, that they do not, that they cannot, and that it is impossible they should, love such a being as this. Under how great and dangerous deception, then, are wicked men with respect to the exercises of their hearts towards the character of the true God ! Such was the deception of the Jewish nation during our Saviour's ministry on earth. They appear to have been persuaded that they entertained correct and honourable ideas of the character of the God of heaven, and that they were pleased with his true character, while their hearts were totally unreconciled to it. When Christ exhibited to their view, in the most correct manner, his own character, and in doing this, exhibited the character of his Father, they saw, and could not but see, what these characters were ; yet instead of being pleased with them, the hatred of their hearts was strongly excited against them. Agreeably our Saviour observed to them, "Ye have both seen and hated both me and my Father."

If the wicked Jews, who were under the immediate instruction of Christ, and enjoyed peculiar advantages for becoming acquainted with the true character of God, and of avoiding all mistaken apprehensions concerning it, were under the greatest deception with respect to that character, what will secure wicked men, at the present day, from the same deception ? Their wicked hearts are as likely to deceive them, as the hearts of the wicked Jews were to deceive *them*. This conclusion we are persuaded is obvious and correct. How alarming then, as well as criminal, is their situation ! Altogether opposed to the character and government of the God of heaven, and yet ignorant that this is the case, while in a state of moral stupidity ! To convince them that they are enemies to God ; to convince them that their hearts are deceitful above all things, as well as desperately wicked, is not in the power of men or of angels. No reasoning, however strong and conclusive, will be available to this purpose ; the clear, express and numerous declarations of the holy scriptures are often not available. How exceedingly dangerous and alarming, then, as well as criminal, is their situation ! O God ! may it please thee, of thine abundant mercy, to make these observations instrumentally efficacious to the conviction and saving conversion of at least some one precious soul, for the sake of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ.

SILAS.

(To be continued.)

THE

THE TEMPORAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF MINISTERS.

A PERSON informed me that, some time since, when provisions, especially bread, were higher in price than they are at present, several principal persons of a congregation were spending an evening together; the conversation turned upon the relative value of money, and how much it had been depreciated within the last fifty years. One observed, "A much greater capital is required now, for the same business and the same returns, than formerly." Another said, "The same profits, with the same returns, which would have rendered a tradesman's family comfortable and respectable a few years since, now, in consequence of the increase of the public burdens, and of the price of provisions, will scarcely afford his family the necessaries of life." A third person remarked, "If this applies to us who are in business, it equally applies to our minister." This led to further conversation on the subject, which terminated in a resolution to raise their subscriptions; and each agreed to make application to such friends as he thought proper. In a few days they sent their minister an affectionate letter, enclosing fifty pounds; telling him he might expect that sum, at least, annually, in addition to his former income. This was done altogether unknown to the minister, and without his expecting it. When alluding to this fact, in friendly conversation with the minister, he replied, "It is true, Sir; and I assure you, it was done in a manner so much like gentlemen, or rather so much like real Christians, that, though I have been with them more than fourteen years, I feel my heart more attached to them than ever. Where is the minister, who, after such tokens of kindness to him, will not cheerfully labour for their spiritual welfare,—feel interested in their interest,—and visit, and endeavour to console them and their families in the season of affliction?"

Another minister, speaking to me of the kind interpositions of his heavenly Father, said, "Some months ago, one of my friends in the church (whose name he mentioned) told me, he was afraid, from my income, and from the nature of the times, I must feel some difficulties in making suitable provision for my family. He wished very much to see me in comfortable circumstances; and, therefore, thought I should do right to turn my attention to some business, in conjunction with the ministry; and that he would advance me, upon a loan, from 500*l.* to 1000*l.* according to the nature of the trade." This kind offer very much surprised the minister, and excited his grateful acknowledgments. At first, he seemed disposed to
accept

accept it ; but said to his friend, " I will think of it, and consult my wife." This he did ; and they agreed to make it a matter of prayer, and converse upon it afterwards. The next day she said to her husband, " Though we have difficulties, we have them with a clear conscience. I am afraid, if you enter into business, and should not be successful, it might injure the cause of Christ in the town ; or, should you prosper, we may get as worldly-minded as some other professors : and thus, what we gain in temporal comforts, we, and the souls of your people, may lose in spiritual advantage. Besides," said she, " you have given up yourself to God and to the people, to fulfil the work of the ministry ; and, surely, the Master whom you serve will not let you go long without your wages. You know, though you are seven or eight hours in the day in your study, you are often complaining for want of time, and lamenting how little you can do in a day. How dejected you appeared the other day, fearing you had given a wrong sense to a passage of Scripture, from not having had time to see how the words of the text were used in other parts of Scripture !—how then will you feel, when so much of your time is taken up with business ! Let us gratefully decline our friend's kind offer, and trust in him who has said, " Dwell in the land," that is, keep the station of duty, " and, verily, thou shalt be fed."—I said to myself, while he related this conversation of his wife, " This is a helpmate indeed for a minister ! I wish all our young preachers might find such."—The minister said to me, " My own reasoning on the subject was a counterpart of my wife's ; and as we so cordially agreed, I told my friend the gratitude we felt, and the reasons which induced us to decline his offer." The reasoning of the minister deeply impressed his friend's mind, and raised him still higher in his esteem. This friend then felt it his duty to exert his influence with the congregation ; and doubling his own subscription, from five to ten guineas a year, he mentioned the subject to others of the congregation, who immediately increased the minister's income between 40 and 50*l.* per annum. " Thus," said the minister, " as my family have increased, my people have increased their subscriptions ; and we live in confident expectation, that as our children rise into life, the people will help me to bring them forward suitably to my situation."

When in company with the gentleman alluded to, I congratulated him on having such a minister, and such a flourishing congregation. The gentleman said, " I was so impressed with his piety and scriptural reasons for declining the loan, that I resolved to entreat his acceptance of a *hundred pounds*." This, I understand, was presented to the minister in a manner becoming an affectionate friend and a humble Christian.—

On

On my saying to him, "Your conduct does you much credit, Sir,"—he replied, "I can assure you, I have never had any other abiding feelings on my heart respecting any thing I have done for my minister, than painful ones, from a consciousness that I have not done enough. When I think of the benefits I derive from his ministry, the comfort he often affords me as my family counsellor, and as a second father to my children; and consider how much I have gained for my family, and how little he has gained for his, during the time of our acquaintance,—I cannot think what I have done more than duty calls for; and I hope, as his family rises, I shall not forget that I am a steward!"—I would here only remark, that the praises of such men ought to be in the churches.

Travelling in the west of England some months since, a tradesman, who, I understood, was a deacon of an Independent church, offered me a seat in his chaise, for about sixty miles. In the course of the ride, the conversation turned upon the income of ministers, as mentioned in the *Evangelical Magazine*. He said, "I have felt the force of what I have read in that publication; and am constrained to think, as a congregation, we have not done all for our minister we could and ought to have done. It has some time been in agitation among us, to build a neat and commodious house for the minister; and the last time I was in London, I purchased 600l. three per cent. stock, which I have devoted towards that object when it is called for; which I have pledged to my friends as my part towards the building; and I have no doubt but the object will be accomplished."—Might it not, with propriety, be said to some other congregations, "Go ye, and do likewise?"

I was not a little interested in a friendly conversation with a minister and his wife, in another part of the kingdom, who, in speaking on this subject, mentioned a pleasing number of proofs of the gracious care of God displayed toward them in seasons of necessity. Among others, she related the following:—"I shall never forget what we felt some little time since in a case of this kind. You know what I mean," said she to her husband."—"Well," said he, "tell our friend, he will make no improper use of it."—"The expenses of my last confinement," said she, "excited some anxious feelings in our minds; and after conversing on the subject, my husband noticed it in prayer with me in the morning, with humble petitions and confident pleas at the throne of grace. The same day, a friend and one of the congregation came to see me, for the first time during my confinement. Having prefaced her kindness, by saying she was under great obligations to my husband as a minister, she begged my acceptance of a token of her

her gratitude; putting two ten pound notes into my hand. The same day we received a letter from a lady, a friend at a distance, enclosing a ten pound note. Could our liberal friends have seen, when my husband came home, and I had informed him of the kindness of the Lord towards us, with what tears and emotions of soul we knelt before the Lord, and poured forth our grateful feelings for such evident answers to prayer; and with what earnestness we supplicated for the spiritual and eternal welfare of our friends, I think their feelings would have taught them the meaning of this passage:—"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Thus our fears were silenced, and our prayers and pleadings were turned into admiration and gratitude.

These, with many other equally interesting facts, have come to my knowledge; and which I would relate, were it not for filling too many of your pages. These, I think, tend to show the necessity of Christians attending to this subject, and likewise the use of stating it to the public. While they equally prove, that those who honour God, by trusting him in the way of duty, and by making use of no improper means for relief, God will honour by a seasonable and suitable supply.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

Sunday-School Society.

BY a late Report of the Sunday-School Society in London, it appears that, since the institution in 1785, they have established or assisted 2232 schools, in which 200,787 scholars have been instructed; and they have distributed, besides Spelling-Books, 42,680 Testaments and 6,583 Bibles, besides donations of more than 4000*l.* in money.

Edinburgh Society.

THE "Edinburgh Religious Tract Society" during the last year printed 21,000 Tracts, which have been distributed to the members, and among various charitable institutions.

QUERIES.

QUERIES.

IN Acts ix. 7, we are informed, That the men who journeyed with Saul towards Damascus, "*heard* the voice, but saw no man:" and in chap. xxii. 9, Saul himself, relating this miraculous event, says, "They that were with me saw indeed the light, but *heard not* the voice."—How are these texts reconcilable?

IS it the duty of a bankrupt to consider himself bound, in the sight of God, to make up his dividend 20s. in the pound, if, after setting up in business again, he prospers, and is able to do it? or, may he retire from business without making up his dividend, when he finds himself possessed of sufficient property; and consider himself an honourable Christian, eligible for any public station in the church?

POETRY.

GREAT God, thou guardian of each hour,
Thou guard of all my ways;
My morning steps confess thy pow'r,
And night proclaims thy praise.

The secret purpose of my soul
Is to thy wisdom known;
Thine eye directs my walk by day,
And sees my lying down.

On every side I find thy hand,
Where'er I turn my view;
And e'er my lips could speak my heart,
Thou, Lord, my meaning knew.

Vainly to trace such wond'rous power,
My grov'ling reason tries;
Fruitless attempt! my strictest search
Th' amazing subject flies.

Should hell inspire the blacken'd thought,
From thee, my God, to hide;
Where should a helpless mortal go,
In secret to abide?

If I to heav'n direct my search,
There thy full glories shine;

And

And hell's dark prison feels thy arm,
And owns the wrath divine.

If, with the morning's early light,
I seek the western sea ;
There shall thy hand direct my flight,
And disappoint my stay.

If, favour'd with the ev'ning shades,
I court the rayless night ;
The gloom, dispers'd at thy command,
Shall give me to thy fight.

Darkness and light (to thee the same)
Fulfil thy great design ;
And suns and shades before their God
With equal brightness shine ;

Before that God, whose piercing eye
This curious frame survey'd,
And my embryo-state his skill
In every part display'd.

Thy boundless thought contriv'd the scheme,
And each proportion plann'd ;
Before the clay, my future frame,
Was fashion'd by thy hand.

How shall my tongue describe my soul,
Or paint the love I bear ;
Or count the numerous thanks I owe,
For thy surrounding care ?

Less num'rous are the countless sands,
That swell the lengthen'd shore ;
And in the morning when I wake,
I find the number more.

Search me, O God ! with strictest view,
Explore each secret part ;
Know the recesses of my soul,
And frailties of my heart.

If error clouds my darken'd mind,
Remove the dismal gloom ;
Conduct me with a father's hand,
And bring thy servant home.

